



Yamaha FZR1000 OW01

PB loves a street sleeper. Especially one with an improbably large engine stuffed into a teeny chassis. FireBlade-powered CBR600s were fun for a while, as were GSX-R1100-powered GSX-R750s.

It's hard to imagine an OW01 ever being a street sleeper. This sort of bike always attracts a crowd; it doesn't take much to be inspired by the attitude and brutal styling of an OW01. A pulse is sufficient.

But the Yamaha's biggest problem was always its pesky road bike brother, the FZR1000R. For those of us not racing in the 750 Superbike class, the FZR1000R EXUP made more power, was more reliable and went faster as standard – for half the price of an OW. It had a similar Deltabox chassis and handling that was good enough for any of us, pre-FireBlade. The OW01's extra cost bought you quality engine internals ready for race tuning, plus a 33kg weight saving over an FZR1000R, but the fact was that (racers aside) the OW01 was a waste of money.

Honda didn't have the same problem with the RC30. There never was a VFR1000R (more's the pity), which meant that by the mid-1990s, when its racing days were over, a used OW01 was about as desirable as passing a hedgehog... until some clever fella thought of fitting the powerful, reliable and easily tuneable FZR1000 motor into an old OW, that is.

The first bloke we are aware of who achieved this was (ironically) the acclaimed VFR/RC30 tuner Jez

Lloyd. He found it an easy fit – the bigger engine is no wider than the 750. But it is slightly taller, so the chassis performance was compromised because the exhaust collector scraped when you braked hard or gave the suspension some stick.

It didn't take long to sort that one. Cutting away a small part of the frame was a simple solution and once that was sorted, the FZR/OW hybrid was a winner. Before long, tuners were replacing the FZR's five-speed gearbox with the six-speeder from the YZF750, which made a big difference.

The FZR/OW became a popular combination for the Irish road racing scene. The chassis was more than capable of handling an FZR engine tuned to 160bhp which could easily survive a season without needing a rebuild. Even a lightly-tuned OW01 would be lucky to do half that. Until a few years ago, you'd still see them for sale in MCN, usually looking tired, with the local builder's merchant sponsor stickers peeling away.

Funnily enough, the OW01's successor, the R7, seems to be going the same way. There are as many used R7s around with R1 engines fitted as there are standard bikes. The bloke who owns this immaculate FZR-powered OW also has an R7/R1.

Seeing this bike got the whole PB office talking. ZX-9R motor in a ZX-7R? It can be done without too much trouble and the ZX-7R is still a hell of a looker. VFR800 motor in an RVF400? Harder to do, but who knows – someone might have done it. All it takes is some determination... 🏠

'The OW01 chassis is more than capable of handling an FZR engine tuned to 160bhp'



This bike has had much more than just a replacement engine. For starters: Öhlins forks, AP Racing brakes and Marchesini wheels



